



## Press information

### **‘Leica Oskar Barnack Award’: the twelve finalists have been chosen**

**The portfolios of the winners and finalists will be presented to the public in a major exhibition in the ‘Neue Schule für Fotografie’ in Berlin from 25 September to 25 October 2019.**

**Wetzlar, 18 June 2019.** The twelve finalists of this year’s Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA) have been chosen. The complete portfolios from the categories ‘Leica Oskar Barnack Award’ and ‘Leica Oskar Barnack Award Newcomer’ can now be viewed at [www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com](http://www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com).

Around 2,300 photographers from a total of 99 different countries submitted entries to the LOBA competition in 2019. A brief overview of the twelve finalists:

#### **Mustafah Abdulaziz, USA: ‘Water’**

The American photographer Mustafah Abdulaziz began his long-term project considering the subject of water, in 2011. What does water mean for people on different continents, and how do they deal with this essential resource? Their relationship with water tends to reflect how people relate to their broader environment.

Mustafah Abdulaziz was born in New York in 1986. His project ‘Water’ is supported by the United Nations and organisations such as WaterAid and the WWF. Mustafah Abdulaziz currently lives in Berlin.

#### **Francesco Anselmi, Italy: ‘Borderlands’**

The border between Mexico and the USA is 3,200 kilometres long. There were fences and walls here long before Donald Trump, but now, everything is pointing to change. For

'Borderlands', Francesco Anselmi explored the American side of the border: What is it like to live in the shadow of a wall?

Francesco Anselmi was born in Milan in 1984. He studied at the International Center of Photography, and was already chosen as a finalist of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award in 2014. Francesco Anselmi lives in Milan and New York.

### **Enayat Asadi, Iran: 'Rising from the Ashes of War'**

Enayat Asadi focuses upon the issues of poverty, injustice and social discrimination in Southwest Asia. For his series 'Rising from the Ashes of War', Asadi photographed Afghan refugees in transit in Iran, following the Afghan War. To accomplish this work, it was necessary for him to dare to travel through dangerous regions in eastern Iran.

Enayat Asadi was born in Iran in 1981. He is a graduate in electrical engineering and began teaching himself photography in 2009.

### **Mustafa Hassona, Palestine: 'Palestinian Rights of Return Protests'**

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has raged on and off for more than 100 years. Since the renewed intensity of the battles in 2018, Palestinians demonstrate every week on the border to Israel. This is where the portfolio titled 'Palestinian Rights of Return Protests' was shot. The photographs caused a sensation in the media and social networks – especially the shot of a young protester that recalls Eugène Delacroix' famous painting 'Liberty Leading the People'.

Mustafa Hassona was born in the Gaza Strip and has worked as a freelance photographer since 2007.

### **Nanna Heitmann, Germany: 'Hiding from Baba Yaga'**

A journey into the realm of myths and legends: The Yenisei, one of the world's longest rivers, became the leading light of photographer Nanna Heitmann on her journey through Siberia. On its banks, she met loners, drop-outs and dreamers whose worlds she captured with great sensitivity in the pictures of 'Hiding from Baba Yaga'.

Nanna Heitmann was born in Ulm, Germany, in 1994, and studied Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at college in Hanover. In 2018 Heitmann's work was shortlisted for the LensCulture Emerging Talents Awards.

### **Rafael Heygster, Germany: 'I Died 22 Times'**

In his portfolio, 'I Died 22 Times', Rafael Heygster addresses the philosophical question of when a war begins and seeks the answer far from the battlefield in computer games, at weapon fairs and other places where war becomes a consumer product.

Rafael Heygster was born in Bremen in 1990 and is currently studying photojournalism in Hanover.

### **Tadas Kazakevicius, Lithuania: 'Soon to Be Gone'**

In his work titled 'Soon to Be Gone', Tadas Kazakevicius follows in the footsteps of American photographers of the Great Depression like Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans. They too attempted to capture an era and things that were destined to disappear in the foreseeable future. In a similar way, the Lithuanian photographer casts a nostalgic eye on his home country.

Tadas Kazakevicius was born in Vilnius 1984. He is currently working on a book of this work that is scheduled for publication in 2020.

### **Michal Solarski, Poland: 'Rest Behind the Curtain'**

Solarski grew up behind the Iron Curtain, and his pictures conjure up the legacy of an era in which holidays and relaxation were part of the manufacturing process. In his 'Rest Behind the Curtain' series, he presents holiday hotels and sanatoriums as decrepit backdrops for bizarre snapshots.

Michal Solarski was born in Poland, where he also studied politics. He later moved to London to study photography, and still lives and works there today.

### **Tomas van Houtryve, Belgium: 'Lines and Lineage'**

With his work 'Lines and Lineage', the Belgian photographer calls attention to a blind spot of US-American history: the period before 1848, when Mexico ruled the American west. As very few photographs have survived to document this period, Tomas van Houtryve attempts to fill this blank space in history in his own particular way.

Tomas van Houtryve was born in Belgium and works as a concept artist, photographer and author. He has already won numerous international awards for his work. A book of this project is scheduled for publication in September 2019.

### **Snezhana von Büdingen, Germany: 'Meeting Sofie'**

With her 'Meeting Sofie' series, the photographer looks in a very personal manner at a subject not widely discussed in society. Using poetic imagery, she depicts the daily life of her teenage protagonist, who has Down syndrome. Her insightful images reveal to us the limits of our own normality.

Snezhana von Büdingen was born in Russia. She lives and works in Cologne.

### **Sebastian Wells, Germany: 'Utopia'**

For his 'Utopia' project, Sebastian Wells visited 24 refugee camps in seven countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. On these visits, he captured in pictures their symbolic and political functions, as well as the roles of the people living there.

Sebastian Wells was born in Königs Wusterhausen and lives in Berlin. He has been a member of the Ostkreuz Agency since 2018.

### **Johan Willner & Peo Olsson, Sweden: 'Heap'**

The duo Willner & Olsson worked together on the long-term project 'Heap', which documents the landscape and the changes it is undergoing. The photographers aim in this series to discover and observe processes of change that generally remain hidden from the general public.

Both photographers were born in Sweden. They live and work in Stockholm.

The jury members of this year's LOBA were:

**Karin Rehn-Kaufmann**, Art Director & Chief Representative Leica Galleries International (Austria)

**Enrico Stefanelli**, Director of the Photolux Festival (Italy)

**Milena Carstens**, Director of Photography at ZEITmagazin (Germany)

**Max Pinckers**, Photographer & winner of the LOBA 2018 (Belgium)

**Steve McCurry**, Photographer & founder of ImagineAsia (USA)

The winners and finalists of the LOBA will be honoured in the course of a formal ceremony in Berlin on 25 September. The portfolios of all twelve finalists will then be on view from 25 September to 25 October 2019 at a major exhibition in the 'Neuen Schule für Fotografie', Brunnenstrasse 188-190, 10119 Berlin. The LOBA Catalogue 2019, presenting the winners

and finalists in detail with comprehensive portfolios and interview, will be published to accompany the exhibition.

With prizes amounting to a total cash value of around 80,000 euros, the LOBA is one of the segment's most prestigious photographic competitions. The winner in the main category will be honoured with a cash prize of 25,000 euros and Leica M-System equipment (a camera and lens) valued at an additional 10,000 euros. The winner of the Newcomer Award will be honoured with a cash prize of 10,000 euros and will also be presented with a Leica rangefinder camera and lens. In addition to the two main categories, ten further submissions to the competition will each be honoured with prizes of 2,500 euros.

**Note for journalists:**

Downloadable image material: <https://extranet.leica-camera.com/index.php/s/A0LnjdFo4gnxofl>

The image material may be used only with copyright information displayed (see captions on images) and only in conjunction with the 'Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2019/Leica Oskar Barnack Award Newcomer 2019' photographic competition.